

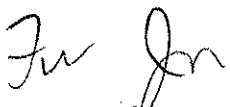
2/15/07

I have been an Investigator with the DPDS for 10 years, the first 6 1/2 yrs I was assigned to the NH Juvenile Office and for the past 3 1/2 the Ansonia- Milford JD. I am here to support HB 6639 as proposed and offer the following information to support said bill.

My position requires a tremendous amount of client contact. On any given day, I am required to interview, assist and meet with as many as 20-25 clients or potential clients' witnesses, Inmates and families of same. As you can imagine, many of our constituents have significant medical, psychiatric and emotional issues that are compounded by their involvement within the court system. A large percentage of these folks are with very little or no health insurance coverage. We are continually exposed to a wide variety of serious health concerns such as HIV, TB, and Hepatitis among others. We are only left to wonder at the number of clients who have not been diagnosed and are unaware of their condition at the time of contact. As the father of two small children I take as many proactive steps as practical to avoid such a medical calamity. This threat is real and it remains constant. Investigators with this division are also required to conduct field investigations and jail interviews that also present some distinct hazardous duty challenges.

Finally, I would also like to draw the committee's attention to the fact that currently the Office of Adult Probation, State Marshal Services and Dept. Of Correction along with local law enforcement all have hazardous duty classification. We work alongside each of these agencies everyday & I would argue that day in and day out, Public Defender Investigators face the exact same hazardous duty issues as they do.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

  
FRANCIS JOHNSON, JR. INVESTIGATOR, PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE